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SUBJECT: GHANA'S NOMINATION FOR THE 2010 SECRETARY'S AWARD FOR
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF COURAGE

REF: STATE 00111471

¶1. Embassy Accra nominates Mrs. Janet Adama Mohammed for the 2010 Secretary's Award for International Women of Courage. Mrs. Mohammed's unwavering commitment and courage in promoting peace and inter-faith dialogue in the conflict-ridden Northern Region of Ghana has created an environment for change and hope for women and youth. Despite the difficulties faced by most women holding leadership positions in northern Ghana, Mrs. Mohammed has earned overwhelming recognition among Christians, Muslims and traditionalists for promoting inter-faith dialogue throughout the Northern Region. A Christian, married to a Muslim, Mrs. Mohammed is highly respected by all sides to the conflicts.

¶2. Mrs. Mohammed's career began in 1987 as a teacher in Tamale, the capital of the Northern Region. She went on to become the Gender Planner and Coordinator for the Northern Regional Integrated Development Programme. This platform launched her onto the path she has followed since 1999, when she became the Development Training Coordinator for the Ecumenical Training and Consultancy Center, Christian Council of Ghana. She soon became the Director of this faith-based institution (1999-2006), while still in the Northern Region. Today she is the Director of the West Africa Human Rights and Democratization Project for Ibis West Africa.

¶3. Background: There are several causes of conflict in Northern Ghana. One area of conflict involves the Dagbon ethnic group, which has one paramount ethnic chief and two royal houses which alternate inheriting the chieftaincy. The conflict continues because both houses refuse to accept the accession to the chieftaincy of the other house. In the town of Bawku, centuries-old resentments stemming from the slave trade and colonization that resulted in the supremacy of one ethnic group over another play out in violent confrontations today. Politicians take advantage of these conflicts, with opposing parties aligning with one or the other tribal factions.

¶4. Since she first became a development officer for Christian Council for Ghana, Mrs. Mohammed has been one of the primary negotiators and mediators of the two conflicts between the warring factions in Bawku and Dagbon. She has conducted training programs and brought factions together, including tribal chiefs for training in negotiation. She shuttles between Accra, Tamale and Bawku to keep negotiations flowing. She provides training for group leaders, opinion leaders, women and children. She started an organization called Women in Peace Building in the north. She is one of the few people who can enter a town during armed conflict, assess the situation on the ground, and bring about a temporary cessation of violence. She rallies emergency assistance in the areas of food and medicine and temporary shelter for displaced people.

¶5. Mrs. Mohammed merits this recognition because for 20 years she has persisted in her efforts to bring the factions to the table. As an advocate of peace, reconciliation, and reconstruction, she is the inspiration for youth and women in the region to take action to stem the long-standing tribal conflicts. Mrs. Mohammed's training programs are changing the social and political outlook of the Northern Region, especially of the youth. Young people are beginning to disassociate themselves from the conflict.

¶6. Mrs. Mohammed is aware of the nomination and is willing to accept the award if chosen. Embassy point of contact is CAO Ellen Irvine (IrvineE@state.gov).

17. Nominee details:

Full legal name: Janet Adama Mohammed

Job title/association: Director, West African Human Rights and Democratization Project for Ibis, West Africa

Date of birth: October 29, 1959

Country of birth: Ghana

Citizenship: Ghana

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Languages: English, Dagbani, Hausa, Twi

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